



MASTER THESIS

MUTUAL TRUST IN THE MANAGER-
SUBORDINATE DYAD: UNDERSTANDING
THE DILEMMAS OF SHOWING EMPATHY

Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences
Master of Science in Communication Studies
Master specialization: Corporate Communication
Supervisors: Dr. M. van Vuuren and Drs. P. Knoers
Student: E.J.M. van Oort
Student number: S1896849
Date: 17th of June 2019

Abstract

This study contributes to communicative leadership development by empirically investigating the interplay between communicative first-line managers and their subordinates in a Belgian division of a Swedish multinational organisation. This research focuses specifically on the demonstration of empathy and its relationship with mutual trust in the manager-subordinate dyad. Thus, given that a first-line manager wants to enhance mutual trust, this study addresses the following research question: *'What do Belgian communicative first-line managers encounter when first-line managers demonstrate empathy towards their subordinates in order to enhance mutual trust?'*

The data, obtained by conducting observations and interviews with first line managers and warehouse employees, results in three trust-related paradoxes: (1) showing empathy versus being vulnerable; (2) showing empathy versus maintaining a professional distance; and (3) demonstrating trustworthy behaviour and maintaining a professional distance. The outcomes of these paradoxes are as follows: employees with a negative propensity towards trust prefer a new first-line manager to demonstrate empathy, although they do not reciprocate this behaviour. Ironically, when a new first-line manager endures challenges in his or her team, the respect and trust of subordinates are earned. A major finding of this study is that unions have a considerable effect on the work floor. This is the first case study in which managerial trustworthy behaviour and the concept of communicative leadership are explored in an organisational setting, but due to a small sample size and a modest number of interviews, the generalisability of this study is limited. Therefore, future research should extend the number of research participants and it would be beneficial to investigate different teams within the organization and their experiences and evaluations of the practice of communicative leadership and managerial trustworthy behaviour. Another direction for future research could be to study unions on the work floor, and more specifically, to examine the influence of unions on the work environment and organisational culture at all levels of the organisation.

Keywords: Communicative leadership, empathy, mutual trust, managerial trustworthy behaviour

Contents

Abstract.....	1
1 Introduction.....	4
2 Theoretical Framework.....	6
2.1 Communicative Leadership.....	6
2.2 Empathy in the Manager-Subordinate Dyad	6
2.3 Interpersonal Trust in the Manager-Subordinate Dyad	7
2.3.1 Initial Trust.....	7
2.3.2 Mutual Trust.....	8
2.4 Attributes of Managerial Trustworthy Behaviour	8
2.5 Organisational Context	9
2.5.1 First-Line Manager.....	10
2.5.2 Belgium's National Culture	10
3 Method	11
3.1 Research Design	11
3.2 Participants.....	12
3.2.1 Interviews.....	12
3.2.2 Observations	13
3.3 Data Analysis	13
4 Results.....	14
4.1 Belgian Unions and their role in the Organization.....	15
4.2 Paradox 1: Showing Empathy Versus Being Vulnerable	15
4.3 Paradox 2: Showing Empathy Versus Maintaining a Professional Distance.....	16
4.4 Paradox 3: Demonstrating Trustworthy Behaviour and Maintaining a Professional Distance.....	17
5 Discussion	18
5.1 Theoretical Implications	18
5.1.1 Limitations.....	18
5.2 Practical Implications	19
5.3 Conclusion	20
Acknowledgements.....	20
References	21
Appendixes.....	26
A: Research project.....	26
B: Overview participants and data collection.....	28
C: Topic list and interview outline.....	29
Topic list.....	29

Interview outline.....	29
D: Codebook	32

I Introduction

Trust is an organisation's 'special ingredient'; it is concurrently the lubricant that allows all of the organisation's elements to cooperate smoothly, while also being the glue that holds everything together (Conley, 2018). Moreover, at the team level, Forbes Coaches Council (2019) stated that one of the most crucial elements of a successful team is mutual trust. Serva, Fuller and Mayer (2005, p. 627) determined that mutual trust can occur when a manager and his or her subordinate have approximately the same level of trust for each other, and when each party is aware of the other's intentions and propensity for trust.

In this era of networks, being able to build trusting relationships is essential to be an effective leader, and empathy is a critical quality in the development of connectedness and trusting relationships (Pavlovich, 2012). Indeed, the demonstration of empathy and the quality of connectedness both have an influence on the operation of an organisation, as a result of employee satisfaction and commitment (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). Moreover, the study '2018 State of Workplace Empathy', conducted by Businessolver in the U.S., revealed that 87% of CEOs perceive a direct relationship between workplace empathy and business performance, productivity, retention, and general business health. In addition, 87% of CEOs and 79% of HR professionals believe that a company's financial performance is related to the demonstration of empathy in the workplace (Higginbottom, 2018). It has indeed been demonstrated that employees are more innovative and productive if they possess strong empathy skills (Ross, 2018).

A Swedish multinational manufacturer based in Belgium acknowledged that managers need a repertoire of communicative skills to be effective, and it therefore offers its employees various types of training. One such training programme is '*Communicating for Results*' (CFR), which was introduced in 2014. The CFR training programme is part of a three-year research project by Mid Sweden University, entitled '*Communicative Leadership Development*'. The project presentation can be found in Appendix A. This new training adapted the principles for communicative leadership and key behaviours as defined by Johansson, Miller, and Hamrin (2014) to the organisation's business and culture.

The CFR training is based on four elements: (1) link communication to performance; (2) prepare and follow up; (3) build trust; and (4) encourage dialogue. The researcher is directly involved in this research project and therefore monitored the CFR training and two managers in Belgium. Thus, the researcher was able to use the data that was initially gathered for the research project for this study. Due to personal interest, the researcher chose to highlight the demonstration of empathy and its relation to mutual trust in the manager-subordinate dyad.

The aim of the present study is to contribute to communicative leadership development by empirically investigating the interplay between communicative first-line managers and their subordinates in the Belgian division of a Swedish multinational organisation. Therefore, first line managers and warehouse employees were observed and interviewed. During those interviews first line managers and employees reflected on their managerial trustworthy behaviour and communicative leadership practices with regard to fostering mutual trust in the manager-subordinate dyad.

In order to achieve this aim, given that a first-line manager wants to enhance mutual trust, the following research question is posed:

'What do Belgian communicative first-line managers encounter when first-line managers demonstrate empathy towards their subordinates in order to enhance mutual trust?'

This is the first case study in which managerial trustworthiness and the concept of communicative leadership is explored in a dynamic organisation, and as far as the researcher is

aware, research that specifically addresses the demonstration of empathy in relation to mutual trust in an organisational setting has not been documented. Therefore, this study contributes to a deeper insight into the relationship between managers who demonstrate empathic behaviour and their employees and the mutual trust between them on the work floor. Besides that, the concept of communicative leadership is only explored in the context of communication departments and communication professionals (Johansson, Miller, & Hamrin, 2014).

In the following sections, the theoretical framework, research methods, and the results and discussion are presented.

2 Theoretical Framework

This section elaborates on the concepts that are essential to a comprehensive understanding of this study. Firstly, communicative leadership is explained, followed by showing empathy, trust in the manager-employee dyad, managerial trustworthy behaviour, and lastly, the organisational context.

2.1 Communicative Leadership

Conventionally, communication was understood to be an unpretentious linear process in which a sender communicated a message to a receiver, who then understood and acted on the message. In that regard, leadership communication was defined as the 'controlled, purposeful transfer of meaning by which leaders influence a single person, a group, an organisation, or a community' (Barrett, 2006, p.398), which is also known as the 'transmission view' of communication (Fairhurst et al., 2002). However, communicative leadership surpasses the approach of solely dealing with traditional communication processes (Hamrefors, 2010). The concept of communicative leadership was introduced in Sweden in the late 1990s (Högström et al., 1999). Being 'communicative', according to the dictionary of the Swedish Academy, indicates people who willingly inform others of their thoughts, are open, and are willing to talk and share information. Johansson et al. (2014) described a communicative leader as a person who is perceived to be open and involved, who proactively shares and asks for feedback, and who involves his or her employees in dialogue and in the decision-making process. Managers tend to use this approach because they are convinced that communicative leaders are more effective than or outperform non-communicative leaders in achieving organisational goals and motivating employees (Johansson et al., 2014). Another definition of communicative leadership was stated by Zugaro (2018):

Communicative leadership is the corporate translation of empathy and active listening. It describes the ability of a company to become a truly communicating organisation with an empathetic and outside-in culture which is able to listen to all internal and external stakeholders in order to drive decision-making processes and therefore ensure a constant transformation and adaption process. ('Communicative leadership', 2018)

Moreover, the most appropriate communication behaviours for manager-employee level interactions and for managers' communication across teams or work units have been clustered into eight key principles (Jablin & Sias, 1994). The eight key principles of communicative leadership are as follows: firstly, communicative leaders coach and enable employees to be self-managing. Secondly, they provide structures that facilitate the work required. Thirdly, they set clear expectations. Fourthly, they are approachable, respectful, and express concern for employees. Fifthly, they actively engage in problem-solving, follow up on feedback, and advocate for the unit. Sixthly, they convey direction and assist others in achieving their goals. Seventhly, they understand and convey to employees their unit's contribution to the organisation's overall objectives (Fairhurst, 2005). Eighthly, communicative leaders actively engage in the framing of messages and events, and enable and support sense-making (Johansson et al., 2014). Although all eight principles are valuable, the focus of this study is the expression of managers' empathy towards employees. Therefore, in the following section, the construct of empathy is discussed.

2.2 Empathy in the Manager-Subordinate Dyad

As has been reported in previous studies, an important antecedent to effective leadership is emotional intelligence (George, 2000, 1998a). Empathy is a part of emotional intelligence. Salovey and Mayer (1990, p. 194) affirmed this viewpoint by stating that 'empathy may be a central characteristic of emotionally intelligent behaviour.' Gentry, Weber, and Sadri (2007) provided a comprehensive definition of empathy: 'Empathy is the ability to experience and relate to the thoughts, emotions, or experience of others.' According to Plutchik (1987, p. 43) empathy fosters a bond between individuals by sharing positive and negative emotions.

Empathy is more than simple sympathy, which is being able to understand and support others with compassion or sensitivity. The latter is also known as passive empathy, because passive empathy lacks influence on the team's shared emotional tone. Unlike interactive empathy, in which subordinates recognize a manager's role in fostering a shared emotional experience in which managers demonstrate care and concern for their subordinates. Therefore, a manager should communicate his or her recognition, understanding and consideration of their subordinates' emotions while communicating impart a sense of self-worth and value (Kellett, Humprey & Sleeth (2006). Moreover, a manager's ability to respond empathic is initiated by the subordinate's cues given during conversation or by impressions a manager receives of the state of mind or feeling of the subordinate (Katz, 1963, p. 5).

Notably, in an earlier review of leadership effectiveness, a leader's higher consideration of and sensitivity to the needs of his or her subordinates was understood to be a crucial determinant that distinguishes outstanding leaders from less effective ones (House & Podsakoff, 1994). Cooper and Sawaf (1997, p.51) emphasised that the way that managers make their employees feel is what makes employees like and care about their managers. Similarly, Bass (1985) noted that a transformational manager, who demonstrates to his or her employees that their contribution is valued and recognised and that he or she cares for their needs, is one who has and displays empathy. Indeed, empathic competencies, such as showing consideration (Stogdill, 1965), being friendly and supportive and showing concern towards employees (Yukl, 1998, p.99), is pre-eminent managerial behaviour when managing relations.

In summary, feeling and demonstrating empathy towards employees is crucial managerial behaviour, for when managers are able to understand why employees think and behave in a certain way, this enables them to adapt their communication towards them. This can eventually lead to higher job performance and successful management (Gentry, Weber, & Sadri, 2007).

2.3 Interpersonal Trust in the Manager-Subordinate Dyad

In addition to showing empathy, trust is an essential aspect of cooperative relationships. Therefore, the focus of this section is on interpersonal trust in the manager-subordinate dyad. Trust has some extraordinary implications for the work floor as an influential link between people (Bligh, 2017), in which trust can have a significant effect on the productivity of individuals, groups and the organisation (Brower, Lester, Korsgaard & Dineen (2009). As Colquitt, Scott and LePine (2007) and Dirks and Ferrin (2002) described, trust on a personal level as in mutual trust between employees and managers, is positively related to job performance and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and negatively connected to counterproductive outcomes, such as in employees' motivation to leave the organisation. In this research, trust is defined as one's willingness to rely on and believe in another person (e.g., Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). However, before these positive and negative trust-related outcomes can occur, trust must first be fostered in the manager-subordinate dyad.

2.3.1 Initial Trust

It is currently normal practice for employees to interact with new managers and vice versa. In this kind of situation, in which both parties have not cooperated for long enough to establish an interaction history together, initial trust is involved. Initial trust situations occur spontaneously, such as by the introduction of a new manager or colleague, during cross-functional meetings or due to a merger, when two groups of employees are brought together (McKnight, Cummings, & Chervany, 1998). Hence, initial trust only applies during the first encounter of two individuals, as set of groups, or a manager and a group. Therefore, initial trust cannot be based on previous experiences or prior personal observations. Instead, it is based on a person's disposition to trust or institutional cues that make a person trust another without prior knowledge. This top-level concept of trust can be divided into two constructs: firstly, trusting intention, meaning that one is willing to rely on another person in a given situation (e.g., Currall & Judge, 1995), and secondly,

trusting beliefs, which means that one believes that the other person is benevolent, competent, honest and predictable in a given situation (Mayer et al., 1995).

Moreover, when people first meet or interact, initial trust (McKnight, Cummings, & Chervany, 1998) can be reinforced by sharing information, which will enhance further information sharing. This can lead to a mutually reinforcing dynamic spiral of trust and information sharing within the dyad. However, if the initial expectation of the employees or manager is one of distrust, this spiral will degenerate into less information sharing and reduced trust. Information sharing can be perceived as risky, as it is possible that the other person may exploit the information for his or her own benefit and take advantage of the other's vulnerability in negotiations. Therefore, according to Zand's (1972) model of the dynamics of trust, information sharing between two parties is influenced by their initial expectations of trust. Moreover, trust propensity is an attitude that is influenced by parties' attributes as well as by their interactions and the context in which those interactions occur (Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998).

2.3.2 Mutual Trust

If trust is fostered, it is possible that each party's level of trust in the other will differ, because managers and subordinates face different types and levels of trust and risk in exchange relationships (Korsgaard & Sapienza, 2002). Thus, both parties do not have to reach the same level of trust, also known as mutual trust. To be more precise, mutual trust can be defined as complementary trust, in which both parties in the dyad have approximately equal trust in each other at a particular moment (Serva, et al., 2005). Indeed, managers and subordinates may also differ in their interpretation of the same event, resulting in divergent evaluations of fairness of exchanges and, accordingly, of each other's trustworthiness. Besides, the risk faced by one party or the other can be noticeably greater depending on culture, reward systems and organisational policies (Brower et. al, 2009). In brief, managers' and subordinates' trust levels are relatively independent of each other (Brower et al., 2000; Mayer et al., 1995) and diverse factors contribute to the establishment of trust between two or more persons.

However, when a manager and an employee have the same level of mutual trust, it is positively associated with task performance and interpersonal facilitation, and with the likelihood for employees to demonstrate more positive work and relationship behaviour towards their colleagues (Kim, Wang, & Chen, 2018).

In the next subsection, managerial trustworthy behaviour is discussed. Managerial trustworthy behaviour plays an important role in the trust-fostering process in the manager-employee dyad. In addition, the attributes of managerial trustworthy behaviour are examined during the interviews to develop an understanding of the situation of trust from the employees' perspective.

2.4 Attributes of Managerial Trustworthy Behaviour

After the introduction of a new manager and the initial trust phase, employees observe their new manager and his or her behaviour. In order for employees to be able to identify their managers' trustworthy behaviour, observations of managers' specific behaviour can be made during employee-manager interactions (Whitener et al., 1998). In other words, judgements of trustworthiness can be made by studying a manager's behaviour, which is also termed 'managerial trustworthy behaviour'. Managerial trustworthy behaviour can be understood as a manager's performance of an action or interaction out of his or her free will. This sort of behaviour contributes to fostering trust among employees and conveys the impression that the manager is trustworthy (Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner 1998).

Although managerial trustworthy behaviour is crucial, without the involvement of other attributes, it is insufficient to foster employees' trust (Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner 1998). See Table I for an overview of the different attributes of managerial trustworthy

behaviour. In order to investigate how managers foster trust, employees were interviewed and questioned about their managers' demonstrated trustworthy behaviour.

Table 1: Overview of the different attributes of managerial trustworthy behaviour.

Attributes	Description
Behavioural consistency:	Enables employees to predict the manager's future behaviour. Predictability of trustee's actions reinforces trustor's level of trust in the trustee.
Behavioural integrity:	Telling the truth and keeping promises. Congruence between what the leaders say and what he or she does.
A delegation of control:	Economic view: Employees have greater control over decisions that affect them. Social view: Employee involvement in decision-making implies respect and trust.
Communication:	(1) Information accuracy, (2) explanations for decisions, (3) openness.
Expression of concern:	(1) Sensitivity to employees' needs, (2) protecting employees' interests, (3) refraining from exploiting employees.

Note: Table is adapted from *Managers as Initiators of Trust: An Exchange Relationship Framework for Understanding Managerial Trustworthy Behaviour*. Whitener, E.M. & Brodt, Susan & Korsgaard, M & Werner, Jon. (1998). *Academy of Management Review*. 23. 513-530. 10.5465/AMR.1998.926624.

Although all attributes were discussed with the interviewees, this study focused on the 'sensitivity of employees' needs' attribute.

2.5 Organisational Context

At an organisational level, the Belgian manufacturer in question can be described as an organisation that is focused on efficiency; therefore, it seems to be a highly centralised, formalised, hierarchical organisation. Open dialogue, teamwork, and leadership are described as their greatest motivation (Volvo Group, 2019).

This is in line with the CFR training that the organisation offers to all of its managers worldwide, including those who are active in Belgium. The CFR training is designed according to the organisation's values and targets to improve employees' communicative leadership skills. Indeed, the organisation provides its employees with diverse opportunities to develop themselves on both a personal and professional level, to improve their competencies, know-how, and generally help them to become better at performing their jobs.

This study took place in a warehouse, in which all research participants were active in or were related to the national and international parts warehouse department. In this department, work is divided into teams, and each team is supervised by a team leader and a first-line manager (FLM). The latter is responsible for four teams and their performance. Accordingly, the FLM works closely with the team leader of each team, and most work-related decisions are made in cooperation with them.

Each team comprises approximately 15 warehouse employees, who work in day or night shifts. The warehouse employees perform different sorts of tasks; for example, driving reach trucks, picking goods, collecting goods in boxes and preparing them for shipping. At the beginning of the year, general goals are communicated to the team, which are followed-up directly during daily and weekly team meetings. During the team meetings, the teams' progression is examined and discussed. Thus, throughout the whole week, employees receive information about their performance in relation to the predetermined goals. All of these activities are managed by the FLM and the FLM is held accountable for his or her teams' performance.

2.5.1 First-Line Manager

As the name implies, a FLM is the 'first in line', meaning that they are positioned between the work floor and higher management. As Huy (2002) outlined, 'middles' who operate between the front line and top management, are the cornerstone of organisational change. Moreover, Huy's study determined that middle managers must manage subordinates' feelings first, such as by overcoming anxiety and defensiveness, before they can implement change. This can be a challenge, because not all employees are motivated to change. In fact, discussing change can result in confrontational situations, because employees are not always content with proposed changes. However, many changes and projects taking place among the various teams and personalities on the work floor (personal communication, November 7, 2018). In addition, FLMs must perform under time pressure, and their alignment and communication with higher management can be difficult at times (E. Jacobs, personal communication, December 7, 2018).

Thus, a FLM's position between management and the work floor is a difficult one, and the company often struggles to recruit personnel for the FLM function and to retain new FLMs for an extended period (E. Jacobs, personal communication, December 7, 2018).

2.5.2 Belgium's National Culture

Because the research took place in Ghent (Belgium), some additional information about Belgium's culture is provided. In 'Belgium – Hofstede Insights' (n.d.) Belgium's national culture is analysed by a model of six dimensions. This six dimensions of national culture are power distance index, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and the uncertainty avoidance index. Which provided the researcher with some new insights into the research context. According to this model Belgium scored particularly highly in power distance, or the extend to which people with little power in society consider inequity normal and acceptable. Cultures with high power distance accept power as a scarce resource; different levels of power are normal and unavoidable. In a high power distance culture there is a great centralization of power and status and rank are important. On a organizational level, high-power distance cultures classify roles along a rigid hierarchy, have a large number of supervisors, and in most cases decision-making only appears at the high end of the hierarchy (Hofstede, 1980). Moreover, in Belgium, hierarchy is accepted and normal, and control is standard. Belgian employees and managers interact in a formal manner, for example by addressing each other by their family name. The model showed that the Belgian culture holds a tension because of the high-power distance and the high level of individualism in Belgium. On the work floor, this results in work relationships that are contract-based and are focused on the task and autonomy, in which any feedback should be provided on a personal level. Because employees in Belgium require hierarchy but also prefer to work autonomously and in a task-oriented manner, this creates tension in the manager-subordinate dyad. However, managers can overcome this tension by having personal contact with their subordinates, conveying to their employees the impression that they are equally important.

In addition, Belgians score extremely highly in the uncertainty avoidance index. This means that in a Belgian organisation, rules, structure and planning are preferred, and if these are not implemented, stress among the employees occurs (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Stress can also be caused by organisational change.

In closing, various forces influence the work environment of FLMs and their employees.

3 Method

In this section, the research design, an overview of the participants, an outline of the interview process, a description of the observations, and an analysis of the data are provided.

3.1 Research Design

As stated in the introduction, this study is not an independent case study and is related to a three-year research project, 'The Communicative Leadership Development.' Notably, the gathered data was used in the research project to study communicative leadership development and value creation in the organisation. However, the gathered data also functioned as input for this study. Consequently, the researcher collected data for two studies simultaneously.

To answer the research question of this study, the researcher had to obtain an accurate description of the actual situations in which managers demonstrated empathy towards employees, with a focus on the establishment of mutual trust in an organisational context. For this purpose, the researcher conducted a descriptive, in-depth case study to first understand participants' contexts, and second, to gather useful data to answer the research question. According to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), case studies accentuate the rich, real-world circumstances in which phenomena appear. In addition, conducting a case study generates detailed descriptions and interpretations, and was considered to be an appropriate method to answer the research question in a relatively short period, feasibly ranging from several weeks to a year (DeMarrais & Lapan, 2004, p.219).

In this research, the mixed method approach was applied, which resulted in both a general and deep understanding of managers' trust-building and communicative behaviour on an individual level (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Thus, semi-structured interviews and participant observations were combined to create rich, qualitative data that was specific to the organisation's context. As McCammon (2019) indicated, semi-structured interviews are used to collect focused, qualitative, textual data. Moreover, this method enabled the researcher to collect rich, descriptive data on the personal experiences and viewpoints of participants. Therefore, this method presented a balance between a structured ethnographic questionnaire and the adaptability of an open-ended interview.

Furthermore, participant observations provided insights into the cultural and institutional situation of the organisation and were therefore helpful in supplementing the information obtained through audio recordings during the interviews. Moreover, the researcher observed organisational practices on the work floor, and studied how managers practiced their leadership through interactions with employees, teams, and other managers. Meetings were voice recorded and notes were taken on a observation template. Besides, being in direct contact with the phenomena of interest is something that could not have been achieved by other data collection methods. Consequently, including participant observations in a mixed method study provided explanation, context (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013) and helped the researcher to understand how things are organized and how people interrelate within the organization context (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999).

In simpler terms, the researcher partook in CFR training sessions, held pre- and post-training interviews and shadowed and observed the managers during their daily work routines to gather data. A subject of discussion was, for example, the obstacles that managers faced during their first period as a manager in the organisation and how they managed to establish trusting relationships with their teams of employees. In addition, three employees were interviewed. The interviewees were asked about their managers' displays of managerial trustworthy behaviour. The researcher then met with the managers after work and discussed their roles in an informal setting.

3.2 Participants

This research included two different groups of participants based on their roles in the organisation. The first group contained exclusively managers, and the second group contained only warehouse employees.

Two managers were recruited by the CFR trainer in consultation with the coordinator of the CFR research project, and the recruited managers then introduced the researcher to the warehouse employees. The two strategically selected managers participated in the CFR training, and their selection was based on hierarchical position, gender, and type of leadership role, in order to determine leaders' perceptions of communication challenges and practices in their everyday communication environment (Patton, 2002). The two managers were interviewed at intervals in order to investigate their views on communication development and obstacles to development.

In addition, all other CFR participants were observed during the training. This group of 14 managers enrolled in the training out of their own free will and were from two domains of management (office managers and production managers). The group of CFR participants included both males and females, and their periods of employment varied from three to 23 years.

As mentioned above, three warehouse employees were interviewed to discuss their managers' behaviour with regard to communicative leadership and managerial trustworthy behaviour. The selection criteria for the warehouse employees were their availability, role and years of service in the organisation. Moreover, the participants were recruited for the study through convenience sampling.

This resulted in observations and interviews with two managers and three interviews with warehouse employees, in addition to three observations of the all the other CFR participants during the CFR training. For a complete overview of all the participants, functions, and methods, see Appendix B. All interviewed participants were men who were active in or worked in relation to the international picking department of the Belgian manufacturer, where parts are stored, picked, combined and shipped. In this way, managers' and employees' views on managerial trustworthy behaviour and trust-building behaviour were collected.

3.2.1 Interviews

The managers and warehouse employees were questioned about managerial trustworthy behaviour and communicative leadership during the interviews. In total, seven interviews were conducted: two interviews per manager and one interview per warehouse employee. Moreover, all interviews were held individually. The first two interviews with the managers were telephone interviews and all other interviews were conducted face-to-face. The length of the interviews varied from 15 to 25 minutes. The location where the interviews were held was chosen by the managers themselves, and the interviews with the warehouse employees were held in a closed meeting room. Moreover, warehouse employees were assured that all information would be used exclusively for the purpose of this research. Each participant was thanked for his or her time and openness after the interview had concluded.

The interview questions were primarily based on several topics. During the first interview with the managers, the questions were mainly focused on the eight principles of communicative leadership, in which managers reflected on their communicative behaviour and practices. The second round of interviews, including the interviews with the warehouse employees, focused on trust, managerial trustworthy behaviour, and contained questions in relation to communicative leadership. All communicative leadership questions were defined by the research team that was investigating communicative leadership development and value creation within the organisation. By probing with questions and encouraging the interviewees to elaborate on their viewpoints, a thorough understanding of their working environment and the manager-subordinate dyad was obtained.

The actual interviews began with the reassurance that participants' personal data (name and contact details) would be protected and remain confidential indefinitely, and that they could withdraw their consent at any time. Secondly, permission was obtained to record the interview with an audio recording device, for further analysis. Third, to control for emotional influence, the interviewer asked the interviewees how they felt that day and what made them feel that way. Examples of some trust-related questions in these interviews were: *'Do you immediately trust a new manager?'* and *'Which points do you find important to determine whether you trust your manager?'* The first question related specifically to trust and the latter to managerial trustworthy behaviour. Examples of questions that corresponded to this managerial trustworthy behaviour were as follows: *'If the information is shared, is it accurate and useful?'* (communication transparency); *'Can you predict your manager's behaviour?'* (behavioural consistency); *'Is your manager sensitive to your needs?'*; *'Does he protect your interests?'*; and *'Does he refrain from exploiting you and your colleagues?'* (expression of concern). The managers were consulted about the comprehensibility of the managerial trustworthy behaviour interview questions.

The interview questions that were addressed to the managers were slightly different. These questions were mostly self-reflective, although the topics remained the same. Questions such as *'How do you communicate with your employees?'* *'What are your communicative challenges in your role in the company?'* (communicative leadership), and *'How can a manager foster trust among his employees?'* (trust) were asked. A complete list of these questions is provided in Appendix C.

3.2.2 Observations

As previously mentioned, the second source of data was the observations. Two types of observations were carried out in this study: the first involved the observation of three CFR training sessions, and the second was conducted over a full day of job shadowing and observing managers in their daily activities. The purpose of the CFR training sessions was to train managers in four areas that were identified as central in the research project: communicating change, adapting messages, giving and receiving feedback and creating dialogue. During the CFR training, participants learned about communicative leadership and how it relates practically to building trust and encouraging open dialogue. Throughout the sessions, participants engaged in various discussions and gave examples of their communication challenges. Two of the three sessions were audio recorded.

In addition, the researcher spent a full working day (7.30 a.m. to 6.15 p.m.) shadowing the current FLM and a former FLM. During this day, the researcher followed both managers throughout their daily activities and routines, such as meetings, and observed manager-colleague and manager-subordinate interactions.

3.3 Data Analysis

Observations, interviews and field notes were analysed through narrative analysis in order to account for managerial trustworthy behaviour in context-sensitive, discursive and distributed practices (Hamrin, 2016). Accordingly, all interviews and observations were ordered by the day on which they were gathered, and files were created based on the type of data and then stored and catalogued. Moreover, all observations, interviews, and field notes were transcribed, categorised and labelled, and a codebook was created. This resulted in a functional overview and an accurate understanding of what was said during the interviews and observations. Most codes in the codebook referred to the attributes of managerial trustworthy behaviour and communicative leadership, which are described in the theoretical framework. The other codes were generated based on the output of the data. The codebook consisted of four constructs, and each construct consisted of different subcodes. In total, there were 27 codes. All codes were carefully specified. For instance, the code 'behavioural consistency' was described as 'everything that employees said about the predictability of a manager's future behaviour'.

Because the items were labelled, they could be linked together and structured. These structured items collectively form a description of the case that is studied. The complete codebook can be found in Appendix D.

After the categorization of research data underwent peer review to control for unacceptable interpretations or personal views (Kelly, Sadeghieh, & Adeli, 2014).

4 Results

This research focuses specifically on the demonstration of empathy and its relationship with mutual trust in the manager-subordinate dyad. Three cases were presented that provide insight into the paradoxical situations that a FLM faced when he started working at the organisation. These cases resulted in the definition of three trust-related paradoxes and illustrated how difficult it is to be a communicative leader, to show empathy, and create mutual trust in a relatively hostile environment. The cases are described based on the reflections of interviewees and are illustrated by quotations of their words. The discerned paradoxes and their descriptions are presented in Table 2. Furthermore, a thorough description of the unions is presented because of their influential role in the organisation.

Table 2: *Three descriptions of paradoxes of trust and related suggestions for improvement of fostering mutual trust in the manager-subordinate dyad.*

Problem: Description of the situation	Dilemma: Either/or thinking	Paradox: Discovering the link between personal trust and professional trust	Progress towards a more workable certainty
Paradoxes of trust A FLM showed empathy towards an employee and the employee took advantage of it and turned up the team against the FLM.	Should the FLM follow the rules and regulations, and be strict, or should he take personal circumstances into account?	Showing empathy and have one's empathic behaviour exploited.	Following the rules and regulations, take personal circumstances into account and communicate reasons.
How can FLMs demonstrate concern for their employees when the employees try to undermine the FLMs?	Should FLMs behave in the same way as their employees OR should they show concern regardless of the employees' behaviour towards them?	Showing empathy and maintaining professional distance.	Take time to communicate with the employees and share issues and ideas to enable comparison.
How can new FLMs foster (mutual) trust in their teams when the unions give the FLM the feeling they try to destroy a FLM's self-confidence?	Should FLMs offer resistance and act unemotional and distant towards the unions or should the FLMs invest in their relationships with the union?	Demonstrating trustworthy behaviour and maintaining a professional distance.	Take time to communicate with the team and the unions; share issues to enable comparison and discussion.

4.1 Belgian Unions and their role in the Organization

A significant influence at the Belgian workplace is the representatives of the work council (ETUI, n.d.), which is called 'the union' on the work floor. In Belgium, trade unions are active at three levels: the national level, the sector level, and the corporate level. Indeed, trade unions are interwoven with Belgium's national politics and governmental actions (Waddington & Hoffmann, 2000).

Although unionisation has generally declined in industrialised nations (Visser, 2006), in Belgium, Sweden and Finland, the share of union members among wage and salary earners is higher now than in the 1970s. While the union density rate is lower in Belgium compared to Finland and Sweden, the Belgian unions seem to have become more resilient over the years and have even grown between 2000 and 2006. A possible reason for this could be that being a Belgian union member comes with unemployment benefits and union-provided provisions (Van Rie, Marx, & Horemans, 2011, p. 2). The recent focal points of the Belgian trade unions are the creation of jobs, flexibility in all its forms, and education for groups exposed to danger (Waddington & Hoffmann, 2000). At a company level Buyens et al. (1996) note that, according to different disconnected opinion polls, managers still perceive the presence of unions as influential at the work floor. However, facts and information about the presence of unions on the work floor are not easily accessible.

In the context of this research, the unions are chosen by the employees at the workplace and represent employees in negotiations with their employer. In these negotiations, the role of a trade union is to protect its members' interests and to improve their working conditions (Nidirect Government Services, n.d.). Therefore, in practice, employees consult the unions when they are discontented, for example, by an unsatisfactory evaluation or conflict with their manager. Accordingly, the unions will confront the employees' managers about the issue. If the dissatisfaction remains unresolved, the unions can call for a strike and employees can lay down their work.

In summary, the unions play a crucial role in the Belgian organisation and have a strong influence on the work of the FLM. As the FLM quoted: *'FLMs must observe the unions closely and must promptly inform the unions about upcoming events or changes to prevent conflict.'* (Albert, 2018).

4.2 Paradox 1: Showing Empathy Versus Being Vulnerable

In the organisation in question, new FLMs are not immediately trusted by their employees. New manager must demonstrate to their employees that they are worthy of the employees' trust. According to the employee: *'Fostering trust on the work floor is not markedly different to in other situations.'* (Bert, 2018).

From a former FLM's perspective, trusting their employees and being straightforward can help managers to foster trust:

'Managers should show their employees that they are human-beings instead of robots. Moreover, FLMs must show their employees that they can be silent and that they are willing to share information with their employees, to show them that they trust their employees too. [...] In addition, active listening is an important managerial practice to earn employees' trust, so during a conversation, FLMs must focus on their conversation partner.' (Carl, 2018).

Employees share this point of view. Evidently, employees would like their managers to invest time in building a relationship with them on a personal level, as this will enhance mutual respect. (Donald, 2018). Moreover, the three warehouse employees (Bert, Donald and Edy) all agreed that their manager should initiate practices to foster their trust.

Additionally, according to employees, a manager will foster trust if he or she listens and shows compassion towards employees.

Overall, fostering trust seems to be a one-sided arrangement: the FLM should initiate this process, and when a new manager starts working in a team, he must initiate contact moments with the employees, listen to them, show compassion and be straightforward. Obviously, employees have an initial predisposition to distrust. The work of a new FLM can therefore be difficult, because a new FLM cannot easily show empathy and be straightforward and open if he or she must cooperate with distrusting employees. Hence, it is a paradoxical situation: employees want their FLM to show empathy and to be straightforward, but they do not display such behaviour themselves.

To illustrate this paradoxical situation, during an interview, the team leader mentioned that: *'The FLM, at the start of his career, was very strict in following company rules; there was no possibility for deviation.'* (Edy, 2018). At the time of the interview, the FLM was more 'human', according to the team leader; however, the interviewee said that a FLM should not become 'too human'. *'FLMs should be careful with rules and regulations; they should not deviate from them, because employees can take advantage of a manager's humanity.'* (Edy, 2018).

This was the case when the FLM allowed an employee to take care of her child during working hours. For taking leave, clear rules are defined; only when something drastic happens in a person's life should a FLM deviate from these guidelines. However, when the FLM permitted the employee to take leave without following these guidelines, the employee informed her colleagues that she gained permission when they had failed to gain similar leave in the past. This resulted in a commotion on the work floor and angry reactions from other employees towards the FLM; even the unions were informed about the event. Thus, 'being human' and showing empathy was used against the FLM. The interviewee mentioned that: *'FLMs must carefully consider every decision that they make with regard to the work floor.'* (Edy, 2018). *'Because employees test the consistency of their new managers with regard to their strictness and maintenance of policies.'* (Carl, 2018).

This example exposes a contradiction: during the interviews, employees mentioned several times that their manager should be human, show concern, and invest time to establish mutual trust, yet this case illustrates how an employee took advantage of a manager who showed empathy and concern.

4.3 Paradox 2: Showing Empathy Versus Maintaining a Professional Distance

The conflict in the team is identified as the second paradox. As reported by the FLM:

'A new FLM needs to withstand three challenges before employees' respect and trust will be earned: handling the first conflict with the team, bonding with the unions, and being better informed than their employees. You need to have practical knowledge. You have to take a stance for your people, and you must be able to confront the unions. So, you need to take a lot of obstacles before respect is earned. A essential challenge is the first conflict in your team; my team laid down their work, they quitted doing their job. When placed in this situation of conflict, you have to stand firm and provide a solution. Therefore, I invited the most influential person on my team to discuss the possibilities and probable solutions. If a FLM overcomes this conflict and proposes a useful solution, employees' trust will be earned.' (Albert, 2018).

According to the FLM, this is one of the challenges that a new FLM faces. So, before employees' trust is earned a FLM must overcome a conflict. Even if a manager has employees' best interest in mind. This quote also implies that the employees have certain amount of power and that FLMs are forced to behave as preferred by the unions.

Carl (2018) viewpoint on fostering trust in the manager-subordinate dyad is as follows: *'You have to stand between your people, you need to let them know you are equal. They will challenge your beliefs, confront you with the unions, and they will try to convince you of their opinions.[...] Try to cooperate with the employees and really show them that you really want to work together, and that you have their best interest at heart. Besides, you should inform yourself through other channels (Carl, 2018).* This quote also demonstrates that employees try to undermine a new FLM and the FLM has to convince the employees he or she is trustworthy. Albert (2018) mentioned was also, in the case a FLM ignores the employees' trusting stance, and acts like he or she stands 'above' the employees, this will result in conflicts and disobedience.

4.4 Paradox 3: Demonstrating Trustworthy Behaviour and Maintaining a Professional Distance

New FLMs face another challenge on the work floor: the unions. According to the FLM, the unions attempt to hurt the FLMs: *'The unions have the intention to break you, and they try to figure out whether you really stand for your team as a FLM.'* (Albert, interview). The FLM mentioned that: the unions stand for their people, and sometimes their views are diametrically opposed to managers' plans, which can result in fierce discussions (Carl, interview). For example the FLM said:

'If an employee receives a negative evaluation and is not pleased with it, he or she will inform a union and the union will confront the FLM with the issue. Thus, the unions protect employees, which can result in conflict in debates. Although the unions can be very convincing, if the unions notice that the FLM has good intentions and has put his employees first and assured them of their position in the company, the unions will cooperate. The FLM must also provide the unions with a sufficient amount of information in a timely manner, so that the unions are informed about important news and information with regard to employees.' (Albert, 2018).

As the results show, the unions play an important role on the work floor. Accordingly, to be an effective manager, and to foster mutual trust in the manager-subordinate dyad, the FLM believes that:

'To foster trust, managers must have practical knowledge, support their team members, and be able to negotiate with the unions. They must overcome some obstacles before they earn employees' respect, and respect is paired with trust. In addition, being direct and open is essential.' (Carl, interview).

Again, this case demonstrated how employees and the unions behave towards new FLMs. Although new managers and employees must cooperate, the unions and employees first treat a new manager somewhat unfairly, which is surprising, since they appreciate when a manager shows empathy towards them.

Taken together, these results indicate that employees' behaviour differs from the behaviour that they appreciate in a new manager; employees do not show empathy or encourage their new manager to feel that they are a willing and reliable party with which to cooperate. Moreover, their offensive behaviour reveals their propensity towards distrust, which makes it difficult for a new FLM to show empathy towards the employees. Thus, it be stated that a new FLM must operate in a paradoxical situation.

5 Discussion

This section reflects on the study's theoretical implications and limitations, provides some suggestions for future research and describes practical implications. Finally, the conclusion is presented.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The results indicate that three paradoxes of trust appeared in exploring the demonstration of empathy in a new manager-subordinate dyad. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, the initial trust expectation can enforce a dynamic spiral of trust, or the spiral will regress into less information sharing and reduced trust. The results of this study are in agreement with the work of McKnight, Cummings and Chervany (1998). In this study, the employees' initial expectation was one of distrust, which led to the example of misuse of information and exploitation of information for the employees' own benefit. Although the manager demonstrated that he had positive trusting intentions and beliefs and acted upon them, this made him vulnerable. This is evident in the description of paradox I.

The results, and more specifically, the second paradox, seem to be consistent with the research of Cole and Flint (2005), Lind, Kray, and Thompson (1998), and Roberson (2006), who found that employees differ in their interpretation of the same event, which results in divergent evaluations of fairness of exchanges, and accordingly, of each others' perceptions of trustworthiness. Notably, the managers and employees faced different types and levels of trust and risks in their relationships, which is in accordance with the study of Korsgaard and Sapienza (2002).

In addition, the organisational culture has a relatively strong influence on the risk that a new manager faces during his or her first conflict with the team, as demonstrated in the second paradox. Paradoxically, employees prefer a manager who demonstrates trustworthy behaviour, although they do not reciprocate this kind of behaviour. Therefore, showing trustworthy behaviour is crucial, but insufficient in this context to foster employees' trust. Managers in this organisation must first endure some conflict before they are accepted and trusted.

A conflict enables the manager and employees to share positive and negative emotions, both viewpoints, intentions and ideas. Therefore, the manager will understand the employees' needs and employees become acquainted with the managers intentions and goals as a result of the conflict. After the conflict employees will begin to observe the manager's demonstration of empathy which enhances mutual trust in the manager-subordinate dyad (Plutchik, 1987). So, before the conflict in the team a manager's demonstrated empathy can be seen as passive empathy which grew into interactive empathy after the conflict.

Hamrin (2016) indicates that communicative leadership as a concept refers to managers sharing power with others. Communicative leadership supports subordinates to participate in the decision-making process through communication. However, in Belgium, and therefore in the organisation in question, hierarchy and control are accepted norms (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Thus, in most Belgian organisations, the decision-making process is conducted by people in the upper levels of the hierarchy instead of involving employees in the lower regions of the hierarchy. Still, the third paradox demonstrated that the unions long for cooperation, power-sharing and participation. Indeed, by studying communicative leadership relations through how FLMs and their employees report and enact communication, demonstrated behaviour and interpretation of this behaviour are revealed.

5.1.1 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

When interpreting these results, some limitations should be considered. With qualitative research, a considerable level of subjectivity is common. For example, in this study, the presence of the researcher during data collection could have influenced the results. Although the

interviews and observations provided rich data, they could also have resulted in bias by reflexivity, which is also referred to as the 'observer effect'. Besides, the researcher's own feelings may have influenced the case study (McLeod, 2014).

The generalisability of the results is also subject to certain limitations. To develop a complete understanding of the demonstration of communicative leadership, and more specifically, of the demonstration of empathy in order to enhance mutual trust in a manager-subordinate dyad, this study's methods can be improved. For instance, a larger number of interviews and a more diverse sample may allow deeper insights into FLMs, team leaders and employees' experiences, which will increase the possibility to generalise the findings of this study. As this study did not distinguish between the different teams or departments within the organisation, it would be beneficial to investigate two different teams and their experiences and evaluations of the practice of communicative leadership and managerial trustworthy behaviour. Afterwards, results can be compared; this will contribute to the understanding of the demonstration of empathy in order to enhance mutual trust in a manager-subordinate dyad.

Another direction for future research could be to study unions on the work floor, and more specifically, to examine the influence of unions on the work environment and organisational culture at all levels of the organisation. The results of this study demonstrate that unions, in Belgian culture, have a distinct role in organisations and influence FLMs' performances and employees' behaviour. Therefore, studying the unions' role, level of influence and power would enhance organisations' understanding of the unions.

5.2 Practical Implications

As with most organisations, in the organisation considered in this study, FLMs and employees must cooperate to be successful as a team and obtain organisational goals. The FLMs, the unions, and the other employees should be aware of the fact they are interdependent.

As the results demonstrate, in this organisation, employees do not trust their new managers immediately. Therefore, employees' propensity to trust should be taken into account by HR and the new FLM. Indeed, this information can be used to develop interventions aimed at the induction period of new FLMs, in which the new FLM should be offered the opportunity to become familiar with the unions and other team members. A key policy priority should be to schedule a certain amount of time for a new FLM to work together with his or her employees. This will enhance a new FLM's practical knowledge and will create the opportunity for him or her to become acquainted with the other employees on a personal level. Furthermore, HR and the FLM should focus on the characteristics of new team members during the hiring process could be beneficial. HR should check the prospective employees' references (Bingham, 2017) and should express their wish to hire motivated, trustworthy colleagues who are willing to take on an ambassador role in the team by maintaining a positive mindset towards change. This positive behaviour in new employees might influence other team members' behaviour and therefore change the team's attitude towards change.

Next FLMs could involve some employees in the decision-making process, or at least inform them of potential decisions and planned changes and ask for their feedback. By involving these employees, sharing information, and showing interest and concern, the FLM establish a bond. These 'involved' employees can support the FLM during discussions and can explain certain decisions to their teammates, which can create transparency and understanding for an FLM's behaviour.

As in the CFR training, the 70-20-10 principle is applied: 70% of training comes from on the job experience, 20% from exchanging experiences and 10% is conveyed through traditional training sessions. This is how the CFR training is designed and executed. However, the number of participants decreased over the three training sessions. Furthermore, due to the dynamic on the work floor and busy schedules, managers were unable to reflect on and plan their

communicative behaviour on a daily basis. Therefore, the researcher suggests that managers reflect on their behaviour and communication daily by journaling. Another suggestion is that managers record employees' opinions and experiences of their demonstrated behaviour in their journals.

Lastly, the managers and employees could develop, improve, and practice their listening skills, and especially their empathic listening skills (Scharmer, 2009). This means trying to understand another's perspective and critically considering one's own point of view; in other words, listening without judgement.

It is highly likely that these actions will contribute to fostering mutual trust in the manager-subordinate dyad and therefore create a relationship in which empathy can be expressed more easily.

5.3 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to contribute to communicative leadership development by empirically investigating the interplay between communicative FLMs and their subordinates in the Belgian division of a Swedish multinational organisation. More specifically, this study examined what FLMs encounter when FLMs demonstrate empathy towards their subordinates in order to enhance mutual trust. This study has shown three paradoxes of trust in the context of the research. In brief, employees prefer a new FLM to demonstrate empathy, although they do not reciprocate this behaviour. Indeed, the study determined that employees demonstrated mistrusting behaviour and took advantage of their manager's humanity. Ironically, when new FLMs endured some initial challenges in their teams, they earned respect and trust. A major finding was that the unions have a considerable effect on the work floor and therefore on the FLMs' work.

The results of this study show that the demonstration of empathy in an organisational context, where levels of trust differ, can be challenging. Therefore, communicative leaders should inform themselves about the organisation in which they are working, so that they are aware of the effects of their behaviour and decisions in the organisation when they show empathy towards their employees.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my supervisors, Mark van Vuuren and Peter Knoers. I am especially grateful to Mark, as he introduced me to Catrin Johansson, which enabled me to conduct this research project. Mark provided me with personal and professional guidance and taught me a great deal about scientific research. I appreciated his abundance of ideas and inspiration during our meetings. Peter is an expert in the professional field, shared useful tips and ideas and gave me a feeling of calmness during our meetings. I really enjoyed our conversations; I could not ask for better supervisors.

Being part of the research project gave me a useful insight into the academic world, and I therefore want to thank Catrin, and her team. I am also grateful to all of the research participants and my peers for their openness during our conversations.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends, and especially my parents, who showed me so much love and support during this project.

Conducting this research was an exciting and interesting experience.

References

- Bar-On, R., & Parker, J. D. A. (2000). *The handbook of emotional intelligence*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Barrett, J.D. (2006). Strong communication skills a must for today's leaders. *Handbook of Business Strategy*, 7, 385-390. doi:10.1108/10775730610619124.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York: Free Press.
- Bligh, C. M. (2017). Leadership and trust. In: J. Marques and S. Dhiman (Eds.), *Leadership Today: Practices for Personal and Professional Performance* (pp. 21-42). New York, New York: Springer Publishing. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-31036-7_2
- Bingham, S. (2017). If employees don't trust you, it's up to you to fix it. *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles*, 2-5.
- Brower, H. H., Lester, S., Korsgaard, A., & Dineen, B. (2009). A closer look at trust between managers and subordinates: Understanding the effects of both trusting and being trusted on subordinate outcomes. *Journal of Management*, 35(2), 327-347. doi: 10.1177/0149206307312511
- Brower, H. H., Lester, S. W., & Korsgaard, M. A. (2017). Want your employees to trust you? Show you trust them. *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles*, 2-5.
- Brower, H. H., Schoorman, F. D., & Tan, H. H. (2000). A model of relational leadership: The integration of trust and leader-member exchange. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 11(2), 227-250.
- Buyens, D., Vandenbossche, T. & Van Schelstraete, S. (1996). De Human Resources-functie in profiel. Onderzoek De Vlerick school voor Management. *HR Jaarboek*, 17-45.
- Colquitt, J., Brent, S. & A LePine, J. (2007). Trust, Trustworthiness, and Trust Propensity: A Meta-Analytic Test of Their Unique Relationships With Risk Taking and Job Performance. *The Journal of applied psychology*, 92(4). 909-27. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.92.4.909.
- Cooper, R. K., & Sawaf, A. (1997). *Executive EQ: Emotional Intelligence in Business*. London: Orion Business Books.
- Conley, R. (2018) 4 Pillars of High-Trust Teams: How To Take Your Team to The Next Level. Retrieved March 31, 2019, from <https://leadingwithtrust.com/category/teamwork/>
- Currall, S.C. & Judge T.A. (1995). Measuring Trust between Organizational Boundary Role Persons. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 64(2), 151-170.
- DeMarrais, K., & Lapan, S. D. (2004). *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Erlbaum Associates.
- Dirks, K. T., & Ferrin, D. L. (2001). The role of trust in organizational settings. *Organization Science*, 12(4), 450-467.

- Dirks, K. T. & Ferrin, D. L. (2002). Trust in leadership: Meta-analytic findings and implications for research and practice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(4), 611-628.
- Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 25-32. Retrieved from <https://aom.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/AMJ/Eisenhart.Graebner.2007.pdf>
- ETUI. (n.d.). Workplace Representation. Retrieved on April 2, 2019, from <https://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Belgium/Workplace-Representation>
- Fairhurst, G. T., & Connaughton, S. L. (2014). Leadership: A communicative perspective. *Leadership*, 10(1), 7-35.
- Forbes Coaches Council. (2018, May 23). 15 ways to build a two-way relationship of trust with employees. Retrieved on May 27, 2019, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2018/04/23/15-ways-to-build-a-two-way-relationship-of-trust-with-employees/#4e42acf52c37>
- Fuller, M., Heijne-Penninga, M., Kamans, E., van Vuuren, M., de Jong, Wolfensberger, M. (2018) Identifying competence characteristics for excellent communication professionals: A work field perspective. *Journal of Communication Management*, 22(2), 233-252.
- Huy, Q.N. (2002) Emotional Balancing of Organizational Continuity and Radical Change: The Contribution of Middle Managers. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47, 31-69.
- Gentry, W. A., Weber, T. J., & Sadri, G. (2007). *Empathy in the Workplace* [White paper]. Retrieved on May 5, 2019 from <https://www.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/EmpathyInTheWorkplace.pdf>
- George, J. M. (2000). Emotions and Leadership: The Role of Emotional Intelligence. *Human Relations*, 53(8), 1027-1055.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. New York: Bantam Dell
- Guest, G., Namey, E., & Mitchell, M. (2013). *Collecting qualitative data*. London, Unites Kingdom: Sage Publications. doi: 10.4135/9781506374680
- Hamrefors, S. (2010). Communicative leadership. *Journal of Communication Management*, 14, 141-152. doi: 10.1108/13632541011034592.
- Hamrin, S. (2016). Recontextualizing communicative leadership: The interplay of discourses in a Swedish multinational organization. *Int. Journal of Strategic Communication*, 10(1), 18-35.
- Higginbottom, K. (2018, 31 May). Why empathy matters in the workplace. Retrieved on April 26, 2019, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/karenhigginbottom/2018/05/31/why-empathy-matters-in-the-workplace/>
- Himmelfarb, S., Jones, E. E., Kanouse, D. E., Kelley, H. H., Nisbett, R. E., Valins, S., & Weiner, B. (1974). *Attribution: Perceiving the causes of behaviour*. Morristown, New Jersey: General Learning Press. doi:10.1002/bs.3830190308

- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publishing.
- Hofstede Insights. (n.d.). Belgium. Retrieved March 31, 2019, from <https://www.hofstedeinsights.com/country/belgium/>
- Högström, A., Bark, M., Bernstrup, S., Heide, M. and Skoog, A. (1999), *Kommunikativt ledarskap– en bok om organisationskommunikation (Communicative Leadership – A Book on Organizational Communication)*, Sveriges Verkstadsindustrier, Industrilitteratur, Stockholm.
- House, R. J., & Podsakoff, P. M. (1994). Leadership effectiveness: Past perspectives and future directions for research. In J. Greenberg (Ed.), *Series in applied psychology. Organizational behavior: The state of the science* (pp. 45-82). Hillsdale, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Jablin, F. & Sias, P. (2001). Communication competence. In Jablin, F. M., & Putnam, L. L. *The new handbook of organizational communication* (pp. 819-864). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Johansson, C. (2015). Empowering employees through communicative leadership. In G. Goncalves, I. Somerville & A. Melo (Eds.), *Organizational and Strategic Communication Research: Communication for Empowerment* (pp. 85-110). Covilha, Portugal: LabCom.
- Johansson, C., Miller, V. D. & Hamrin, S. (2014). *Communicative leadership development – analyzing value creation in two business organizations*. Sundsvall, Sweden: Mid Sweden University.
- Katz, R. L. (1964). *Empathy: Its nature and uses*. Oxford, England: Free Press Glencoe.
- Kellett, J. B., Humphrey, R. H., & Sleeth, R. G. (2006). Empathy and the emergence of task and relations leaders. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17(2), 146-162.
- Kelly, J., Sadeghieh, T., & Adeli, K. (2014). Peer Review in Scientific Publications: Benefits, Critiques, & A Survival Guide. *EJIFCC*, 25(3), 227-43. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4975196/>
- Kim, T. Y., Wang, J., & Chen, J. (2018). Mutual trust between leader and subordinate and employee outcomes. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 149(4), 945-958.
- Korsgaard, M., Brodt, S., & Whitener M. E. (2002). Trust in the face of conflict: The role of managerial trustworthy behaviour and organizational context. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 312-9. doi: 10.1037//0021-9010.87.2.312.
- Mayer, R., Davis, J., & Schoorman, F. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. *The Academy of Management Review*, 20(3), 709-734. doi: 10.2307/258792
- McCammon, B. (2019, January 21). Semi-structured interviews. Retrieved on March 1, 2019, from <http://designresearchtechniques.com/casestudies/semi-structured-interviews/>
- McKnight, D. H., Cummings, L. L., & Chervany, N. L. (1998). Initial trust formation in new organizational relationships. *The Academy of Management Review*, 23(3), 473-490.

- McLeod, S. (2014) The Interview Method. Retrieved on March 15, 2019, from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/interviews.html>
- Nidirect Government Services. (n.d.). Introduction to trade unions. Retrieved on March 15, 2019, from <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/introduction-trade-unions>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Pavlovich, K., & Krahnke, K. (2012). Empathy, connectedness and organisation. *Journal of business ethics*, 105(1), 131-137.
- Rosales, R. (2015). Energizing Social Interactions at Work: An Exploration of Relationships That Generate Employee and Organizational Thriving. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 4, doi: 10.4236/jss.2016.49004.
- Ross, M. (2018, November 22). 4 Reasons why empathy is good for business. Retrieved on April 24, 2019, from <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/322302>
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9, 185–211.
- Savolainen, T. (1970, January 1). Trusted to lead: Trustworthiness and its impact on leadership. TIM Review. Retrieved on March 15, 2019, from <https://timreview.ca/article/429>
- Scharmer, C.O. (2009). Theory U: Leading from the future as it emerges. *World Futures Review*, 1(2), 81-98. doi: 10.1177/194675670900100213
- Schensul, S. L., Schensul, J. J., & LeCompte, M. D. (1999). *Essential ethnographic methods: Observations, interviews, and questionnaires*, 2. Rowman Altamira.
- Serva, M. A., Fuller, M. A., & Mayer, R. C. (2005). The reciprocal nature of trust: A longitudinal study of interacting teams. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(6), 625–648.
- Tashakkori, A. , & Teddlie, C. (Eds.). (2010). *Sage handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE publications.
- Van Rie, T., Marx, I., & Horemans, J. (2011). Ghent revisited: Unemployment insurance and union membership in Belgium and the Nordic countries. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 17(2), 125-139. doi: 10.1177/0959680111400895
- Visser, J. (2006) Union membership statistics in 24 countries. *Monthly Labor Review* 129(1), 38-49.
- Volvo Group Volvo. (2019, February 18). Our values. Retrieved on March 1, 2019, from <https://www.volvogroup.com/en-en/about-us/our-values.html>
- Waddington, J., & Hoffmann, R. (2000). *Trade unions in Europe*. Brussels, Belgium: European Trade Union Institute.
- Whitener, E. M., Brodt, S. E., Korsgaard, M. A., & Werner, J. M. (1998). Managers as initiators of trust: An exchange relationship framework for understanding managerial trustworthy behaviour. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(3), 513-530. doi: 10.2307/259292

- Yukl, G. (1998) Managerial Leadership: A Review of Theory and Research. *Journal of Management*, 15, 251-289. doi:10.1177/014920638901500207
- Yukl, G. (1999). An Evaluation of Conceptual Weaknesses in Transformational and Charismatic Leadership Theories. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 1999(10), 285-305. doi: 10.1016/S1048-9843(99)00013-2.
- Zand, D. (1972). Trust and Managerial Problem Solving. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17(2), 229-239. doi:10.2307/2393957
- Zugaro, E. G. (2019, January 20). Communicative leadership. Retrieved on March 1, 2019, from <https://www.communicative-leadership.com/>

Appendixes

A: Research project

Mid Sweden University started a new three-year research project on Communicative Leadership funded by the Swedish Knowledge Foundation, Sandvik Machining Solutions AB and AB Volvo. The purpose of this project is to study communicative leadership development and value creation in Volvo Group and Sandvik – both individual (leader communicative behaviour development) and contextual (outcomes of communicative leadership development in teams and organizations) results – by integrating scientific and applied research questions generated by business partners and researchers in collaboration (See Appendix...) for research questions and further information.

The project aims to develop a model for communicative leadership development based on front-line research and business needs, which can be adapted to a variety of contexts. The researcher was assigned to conduct the interviews and observations at the Volvo Gent site.

Business organizations employing the concept want to promote efficient organizing, organizational change and a healthy working environment sustained by engaged and empowered employees. The value created through communicative leadership development, however, demands more investigation. The proposed project takes on this challenge by analyzing communicative leadership development and value creation in Sandvik and Volvo Group. The project, going on between 2017 and 2019, will address scientific research problems related to a) how communicative leadership behaviours and principles are adapted, implemented and trained in the participating business organizations, and b) what are the outcomes of communicative leadership development programs in different contexts, as well as applied research problems related to c) what characterizes an effective communicative leadership development program, and d) what values are created in the organizations through communicative leadership development.

Project presentation

Communicative Leadership Development

– analyzing value creation in two business organizations

A new three-year research project on Communicative Leadership is starting at Mid Sweden University, funded by the Swedish Knowledge Foundation, Sandvik Machining Solutions AB and AB Volvo.

Communicative leadership is related to performance on individual, team, and organizational levels. A communicative leader is often perceived as open and involved, engages employees in dialogue, actively shares and seeks feedback, and practices participative decision making. Business organizations employing the concept want to promote efficient organizing, organizational change and a healthy working environment sustained by engaged and empowered employees. The value created through communicative leadership development however demands more investigation. The proposed project takes on this challenge by analysing communicative leadership development and value creation in Sandvik and Volvo Group. The project, going on between 2017 and 2019, will address scientific research problems related to a) how communicative leadership behaviours and principles are adapted, implemented and trained in the participating business organizations, and b) what are the outcomes of communicative leadership development programs in different contexts, as well as applied research problems related to c) what characterizes an effective communicative leadership development program, and d) what values

are created in the organizations through communicative leadership development. The project aims to develop a model for communicative leadership development based on front-line research and business needs, which can be adapted to a variety of contexts. The project fosters research groups of CORE (Communication, Organizations, Research, Education) and Quality Management at the research center DEMICOM in Mid Sweden University together with Senior Communication Professionals from Volvo Group and Sandvik who are known for their joint pioneering work in defining, analyzing and developing communicative leadership. In the team, Professor J. Kevin Barge, an expert in leadership and communication at Texas A&M University, USA, is a senior advisor. Business partners invest substantial resources to develop and implement communicative leadership for business success globally. Co-production of research will result in scientific and applied knowledge on communicative leadership development and its value creation. The project aims for a broad impact through the scientific and popular publication of the results. This project will contribute to strengthen the team's research position in national and international arenas.

Two previous HÖG projects have been undertaken by the research team: HÖG

2005/0246 Communicative Leadership co-produced with Norrmejerier, Saab,

Sandvik, Spendrups and Volvo Group; and HÖG 2010/0226 Communication in

Change Processes with AstraZeneca, E.ON and SCA. Results contribute to a

knowledge platform for the proposed.

B: Overview participants and data collection

Type of data	Date	Role in organization	Duration of employment	Gender	Length	Notes
Interview	18/10/2018	First-line manager	3 years	Male	12 minutes	Albert
Interview	18/10/2018	Back-up first-line manager	1,5 year in this role	Male	20 minutes	(former first-line manager in text) Carl
Observation CFR training	19/10/2018	Different management functions	3 months - 35 years	Mixed	160 minutes	16 participants
Job shadowing	08/11/2018	Back-up first-line manager		Male	270 minutes	Albert
Job shadowing	08/11/2018	First-line manager	3 years	Male	270 minutes	Carl
Observation CFR training	09/11/2018	Different management functions	3 months - 35 years	Mixed	435 minutes	12 participants
Interview	07/12/2018	First-line manager	3 years	Male	37 minutes	Albert
Interview	07/12/2018	Back-up first-line manager	1,5 year in this role	Male	28 minutes	Carl
Interview	07/12/2018	Team Leader/day team international	24 years	Male	33 minutes	Edy
Interview	07/12/2018	Warehouse employee: order picker	3 years	Male	22 minutes	Donald
Interview	07/12/2018	Warehouse employee: order picker	12 years	Male	25 minutes	Bert
Observation CFR training	07/12/2018	Different management functions	3 months - 35 years	Mixed	90 minutes	6 participants

C: Topic list and interview outline

Topic list

- Communicative leadership
 - Decision making
 - Manager is open and interested
 - Feedback (providing, seeking, receiving and follow up)
- Trust
 - Fostering trust
- Organizational context
- Managerial trustworthy behaviour
 - behavioural consistency
 - behavioural integrity
 - Delegation of control
 - Communication
 - Expression of concern

Interview outline

Before the interviews were conducted, the purpose of the interview was discussed. During the interviews several employees asked if their answers were shared with their managers, the researcher emphasized that everything what is said would be treated anonymously and confidentially. The employees were questioned about how they felt during the day of the interview. Because of a manager's tip, regarding the influence of time and date at the employees' frame of mind, the researcher asked the employees how they felt before she started probing the research-related questions. For example, a few weeks before Christmas employees can feel a bit moody, especially if they are out of vacation days, which could result in a negative attitude towards their manager. Besides, the researcher asked further when she thought it was useful for the research. And, the researcher mentioned that all answers were good and valuable.

Interview questions managers

Questions of consent

Do you agree that we can save your personal data (name and contact details) during the research project? You can always contact us to withdraw your consent later.

Do you agree that we record this interview? We will only publish anonymous data unless we ask you specifically at a later point in time.

Questions on communication and work

What is your role in the company?

For how long have you been working in this role?

Do you have any previous training or education in communication?

What are your communicative challenges in your role in the company?

What are your expectations before the CFR/CiL training?

How do you communicate with your employees?

What ways of communication/channels do you use most?

How is your style of communication?

What do you believe to be your most important tasks or responsibilities as a leader?

How do you work with setting goals (personal/work related, yours/employee/unit)?

How do you communicate them?

How do you manage daily tasks? (Skip this question if time is limited)

What do you do in terms of engaging your employees in decision making?

How do you make sure that your employees and you share understanding?

How do you normally provide feedback?

How do you normally seek feedback?

How do you follow up on feedback you receive?

Employees' questions

Do you agree that we can save your personal data (name and contact details) during the research project? You can always contact us to withdraw your consent later.

Do you agree that we record this interview? We will only publish anonymous data unless we ask you specifically at a later point in time.

What is your role in the company?

For how long have you been working in this role?

My first question: How do you feel now? Are you happy? Neutral? Angry? How are you doing today?

How does your manager communicate with you?

Do you have goals to achieve?

How are goals communicated to you?

Are you involved in decision-making?

Do you and your manager share the same understanding? How does your manager make sure you are both on the same page?

Is your manager open to feedback?

Does your manager ask you for feedback?

How do you normally receive feedback?

How do you know whether or not you could trust your manager?

What actions would you perform to show your manager you are trustworthy?

What should a manager do to earn employees' trust?

Why should you bother earning your manager's trust?

What factors would you consider important when deciding whether or not to trust your supervisor or manager?

What should a supervisor or leader do to earn his or her members' trust?

What actions would you take to earn your supervisor's (leader's) trust?

Why is it important for you to be trusted by your supervisor or leader?

D: Codebook

Construct		Codes	Explanation
Trust	1	Managers' viewpoint on being new in the organization and trust	Everything managers said about the introduction of a new managers and if employees immediately trust this new manager, or if trust should be fostered first (Manager's viewpoint)
	2	Employees' trust in new manager_employee	When a new manager is introduced, do employees immediately trust this new manager, or should trust be fostered first? (Employees' viewpoint)
	3	Employees' trust in manager_employee	Everything employees said about how they know whether they could trust their manager.
	4	Employees fostering trust by manager_employee	Everything employees said about the kind of actions they took to foster trust by their manager
	5	Importance trust manager's trust in employee_employee	Everything employees said about why or whether they think their managers' trust is important to them.
	6	Managers' viewpoint on importance of fostering trust by their employees_manager	Everything managers said about why or whether they think their employees' trust is important to them.
Organizational context	7	Organizational context_all	Everything what participants said about the organization and team they are working at.
Communicative leadership	8	Presenting feedback_manager	Everything what is said about the manager presenting feedback to his employees.
	9	Presenting feedback_employee	Everything what is said about the manager presenting feedback to his employees. (employees' viewpoint)
	10	Receiving feedback_manager	Everything what is said about receiving feedback (manager's viewpoint)
	11	Receiving feedback_employee	Everything what is said about receiving feedback (employee's viewpoint)
	12	Manager perceived as open	Everything what is said about the openness of the manager
	13	Manager perceived as interested	Everything what is said about how the manager is perceived as interested
Managerial trustworthy behaviour	14	Manager engages employees in dialogues	Everything said about face-to-face communication, included a manager's visibility at the work floor
	15	Manager involvement employees' decision-making	Everything a manager said about decision-making and involving employees
	16	Behavioural consistency	Everything what employees said about the predictability of a manager' future behaviour.
	18	Behavioural integrity:	Everything what employees said about if their manager tells the truth and keeping his promises.
	20	A delegation of control_employees	Everything what employees said about delegation of control. More specific the economic view: Employees have greater control over decisions that affect them
	21	A delegation of control_employees	Everything what employees said about delegation of control. More specific, the social view: Employee involvement in decision-making implies respect and trust.
	22	A delegation of control_manager	Everything what managers said about delegation of control. More specific, the economic view: Employees have greater control over decisions that affect them
	23	A delegation of control_manager	Everything what managers said about delegation of control. More specific, the social view: Employees have greater control over decisions that affect them
	24	Communication: (1) Information accuracy	Everything what employees said about the accuracy of information
	25	Communication: (2) explanations for decisions	Everything what employees said about the explanation of decisions
	26	Communication: (3) openness	Everything what employees said about their managers' openness
	27	Expression of concern: (1) Sensitivity to employees' needs	Everything what employees said about expression of concern, more specific, the manager's sensitivity to employees' needs
	28	Expression of concern: (2) protecting employees' interests	Everything what employees said about expression of concern, more specific, if managers protect employees' interests
	29	Expression of concern: (2) refraining from exploiting employees.	Everything what employees said about expression of concern, more specific, if managers refrain from exploiting employees.

